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To: Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

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Subject: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS  
Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling

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Delegations will find attached document COM(2023) 566 final.

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Brussels, 4.10.2023  
COM(2023) 566 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling**

## **1. Introduction and rationale**

Putting the well-being of people and the competitiveness of European industry at the centre of the green transition are key priorities for the European Commission. Cycling, as one of the most sustainable and healthy forms of transport and as a rapidly developing industry, is well placed to support this important process.

Increasing the share of cycling helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, air and noise pollution as well as congestion. Moreover, cycling can improve physical and mental well-being, and social inclusion. It is a key enabler of sustainable tourism and also brings tangible benefits to the local economy through quality green jobs, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.

**The Commission therefore proposes establishing a set of principles to help unleash the full potential of cycling in the EU.**

These principles would be part of the **European Declaration on Cycling** (hereinafter ‘the Declaration’), intended to serve as a strategic compass for relevant EU and national policies in future.

The Declaration included in the Annex to this Communication is put forward by the Commission, to be signed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission as a joint declaration.

It is expected to help achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and the Zero Pollution Action Plan. Furthermore, it aligns with the principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Right, that everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including for transport.

The current proposal responds to the calls from the European Parliament, in particular its resolution on developing an EU cycling strategy<sup>1</sup>, and from the majority of Member States<sup>2</sup>. The Declaration is in line with the New EU Urban Mobility Framework<sup>3</sup>.

## **2. Ongoing efforts**

As stated in the New EU Urban Mobility Framework, to contribute to the EU’s increasingly ambitious climate, environmental, digital, health and societal objectives, the EU needs to take more decisive action on urban mobility in order to shift from the current approach based on traffic flows to an approach based on the more sustainable mobility of people and goods<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0058\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0058_EN.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.benelux.int/fr/publication/european-cycling-declaration/>

<sup>3</sup> COM(2021) 811.

<sup>4</sup> This means a stronger collective/public transport backbone, better active mobility (e.g. walking, cycling) options, efficient zero emission urban logistics and last mile deliveries, and improving accessibility. While such multimodality should be our guiding principle for urban mobility, zero emission and connected, automated and shared mobility will be a key component of the transition to a climate-neutral urban future that also enables suburban and rural areas to connect sustainably with cities. Better management of transport and mobility using multimodal hubs and digital solutions is needed to increase system-wide efficiency.

**However, despite the numerous benefits of cycling, still too few people cycle in the EU<sup>5</sup>**, with huge differences in the level of cycling across Member States, regions and cities. This is in particular due to inadequate infrastructure and resulting safety concerns, as well as differences in cultural attitudes towards cycling and a lack of awareness.

The EU in general and the Commission in particular have already taken several steps to address these issues and promote cycling, such as:

- revising EU transport policies: the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy<sup>6</sup> and the EU Urban Mobility Framework<sup>7</sup> call for increasing the uptake of cycling and other sustainable forms of transport;
- encouraging the use of cycling in the EU concept of sustainable urban mobility planning, part of Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/550<sup>8</sup> on National Support Programmes for Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning;
- setting requirements to better integrate active transport modes in multimodal passenger hubs in urban nodes, and to maintain the continuity and accessibility of cycle paths in order to promote the active modes of transport included in the proposal for the revised Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation<sup>9</sup>;
- setting requirements for collecting and submitting urban mobility data in urban nodes to the Commission, included in the proposal for the revised TEN-T Regulation;
- setting requirements for a minimum number of bike parking spaces in the proposal for a revised Energy Performance of Building Directive<sup>10</sup>;
- incentivising the use of bicycles by introducing a new emissions trading system (ETS2)<sup>11</sup> that will put a carbon price on the fuels used in buildings, road transport and other sectors, and make available significant auction revenues for Member States to support the green transition, including in the transport sector;
- creating the Social Climate Fund<sup>12</sup>, with dedicated funding targeted at vulnerable groups particularly affected by ETS2, to accelerate the decarbonisation of buildings and incentivise the uptake of zero and low emission mobility and transport, including support for buying and using bicycles;

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<sup>5</sup> According to the 2019 Eurobarometer survey, about 9% of EU citizens use (e-)bikes or scooters as their primary means of transportation. Source: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2226>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0789>

<sup>7</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ad816b47-8451-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-250877856>

<sup>8</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023H0550>

<sup>9</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0812>

<sup>10</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52021PC0802>

<sup>11</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023L0959&qid=1688743056255>

<sup>12</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R0955&qid=1688742687499>

[The Social Climate Fund](#), sourced from the revenues of the current ETS and mainly from the new ETS for buildings, road transport and small industry (ETS2), is expected to mobilise from 2026 to 2032 EUR 86.7 billion of support for vulnerable households, vulnerable transport users and vulnerable microenterprises for a fair transition.

- proposing to recast the Energy Taxation Directive<sup>13</sup> to help tackle the climate and environmental-related challenges of transport;
- providing funding for cycling-related projects through various programmes, such as the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the Connecting Europe Facility, the Recovery and Resilience Facility<sup>14</sup>, InvestEU<sup>15</sup> and the Horizon Europe programme;
- supporting research and innovation<sup>16</sup> in cycling-related technologies and services, such as e-bikes, adapted or dedicated bikes and equipment for people with disabilities, bike sharing schemes, and smart cycling apps;
- promoting cycling as a sport, recreational activity and means of transport, which contributes to a healthy and active lifestyle in the context of the #BeActive campaign<sup>17</sup>, culminating in the European Week of Sport<sup>18</sup> as well as through awareness-raising campaigns, such as European Mobility Week<sup>19</sup> and the European Road Safety Charter<sup>20</sup>;
- supporting peer learning between Member States on improving the safety of vulnerable road users, and particularly cyclists, through the EU Road Safety Exchange<sup>21</sup>;
- setting requirements for dedicated spaces for transporting bicycles on new and upgraded trains<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Proposal for a Council Directive restructuring the Union framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (recast) (COM/2021/563 final).

<sup>14</sup> At present, the Commission estimates, based on the assessed and approved recovery and resilience plans that, in total, the recovery and resilience plans allocated EUR 1.7 billion to measures related to cycling infrastructure. These were proposed and are being implemented by Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia.

<sup>15</sup> Some examples of InvestEU operations that support sustainable mobility, among other investments:

- InvestEU Framework for Sustainable Transition (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) to invest in sub-projects on sustainable mobility and urban mobility.
- Framework Operation #14 for Sustainability Guarantee (European Investment Fund) to invest in low and zero emission mobility. This is the first pan-European guarantee product in support of the green transition of small businesses and individuals.
- Green Developer Financing Programme (European Investment Bank) to give framework loans to projects supporting the Paris Agreement objectives (including green mobility).
- Framework Operation #8 SMEW RIDW Joint Equity Product – Climate & Environmental Solutions Sub-Product (European Investment Fund) to support the research, development, demonstration, upscaling and commercialisation of technologies or solutions that contribute to the European Green Deal, including mobility and transport, and the urban built environment.
- Shift4Good Fund I (European Investment Fund), which is focused on smart and sustainable mobility and transport and circular economy and mainly targets B2B businesses. However, the fund is more focused on addressing the large transport medium from cars to air transportation and the maritime sectors.

<sup>16</sup> Numerous relevant projects can be found in the EU Transport R&I project database TRIMIS

(<https://trimis.ec.europa.eu/>)

<sup>17</sup> <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/news/facts-and-figures-about-the-beactive-2022-campaign>

<sup>18</sup> <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/initiatives/european-week-of-sport>

<sup>19</sup> <https://mobilityweek.eu>

<sup>20</sup> <https://road-safety-charter.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://etsc.eu/projects/eu-road-safety-exchange/>

<sup>22</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/782 on rail passengers' rights and obligations (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R0782&from=CS>); the above provisions apply as of 7 June 2025

### **3. The European Declaration on Cycling**

**In order to fulfil the potential of cycling so that it can effectively help achieve EU mobility, climate, environmental, health, industrial and social objectives, the use of cycling in the EU should increase substantially.** This requires the authorities at local, regional, national and EU levels to further step up their efforts to promote cycling and make it a more attractive and safer option for people of all ages, different levels of fitness and those living with physical conditions.

**Against this background, the Commission is proposing to establish a set of principles and related commitments. They will take the form of a draft Declaration by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.** The draft Declaration, as provided in the Annex, is meant as a proposal to be discussed with the European Parliament and the Council, with a view to being signed by all three institutions.

The proposed Declaration builds on previous initiatives from the Member States and the European Parliament, and benefits from contributions gathered from stakeholders<sup>23</sup>.

Its **key principles** are centred around the issues of:

1. Developing and strengthening cycling policies;
2. Encouraging inclusive, affordable and healthy mobility;
3. Creating more and better cycling infrastructure;
4. Increasing investments and creating favourable conditions for cycling;
5. Improving road safety and security;
6. Supporting quality green jobs and the development of a world-class European cycling industry;
7. Supporting multimodality and cycling tourism;
8. Improving the collection of data on cycling.

### **4. Way forward**

This draft Declaration sees the Commission put forward both a reference framework and guidelines to boost cycling levels in the EU and support related quality jobs and industry.

The Commission will promote communication and engagement activities with Member States and all relevant parties to ensure awareness and a shared commitment to the principles enshrined in this Declaration.

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<sup>23</sup> Feedback received at a dedicated meeting of the active mobility subgroup of the Commission expert group on urban mobility on 3 July 2023 and during consultation on the New EU Urban Mobility Framework ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12916-Sustainable-transport-new-urban-mobility-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12916-Sustainable-transport-new-urban-mobility-framework_en)).